

elected to Congress, I never thought I would be asked to participate in crushing the dreams of American children. But that is exactly what the House majority is asking me to do. The House budget reconciliation bill includes \$14.3 billion in overall cuts to Federal student aid programs over the next 5 years. This cut will be the single largest cut in the entire history of the student aid program. I thought the majority did not want to leave any child behind. But obviously what this cut means is they do not want to leave you behind, until you want to go to college.

I know firsthand the importance of student aid. I would not be standing on the floor of this House if it were not for student aid programs. These loans made my education dreams a reality. I am the only member of the California congressional delegation still paying off her student loans. Each month I proudly write that check because I know the best investment I and my seven brothers and sisters could have made was our investment in our own education.

Can you imagine where we will be in 20 years when we lack the professionals that we need in this country? Make no mistake, these proposed cuts to student aid programs will negatively impact the future of our workforce and our economy.

THE MAINSTREAM

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, some liberals opposed to the nomination of Judge Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court claim that Judge Alito is "outside the mainstream" because he supported the spousal notice provision of the Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act. Mind you, this was not paternal notice; it was spousal notice. This was not spousal consent. It was spousal notice. Polling showed nearly 75 percent of the Americans support this provision.

So what is the mainstream in America today? In 2004, 13 States included on their ballot a constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union between a man and a woman. All 13 States passed the measure by wide margins. Today, it is up to 19 States. The polls overwhelmingly support this definition.

A Zogby poll showed 77 percent of Americans support a law requiring a pregnant woman be given information about fetal pain prior to an abortion. Other polls show nearly 90 percent support including the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. A 2005 Gallup poll shows 75 percent of Americans think that State government entities should be allowed to display the 10 Commandments.

Let us not allow liberal interest groups to arbitrarily define the mainstream for us.

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BUDGET RECONCILIATION

(Mr. HINOJOSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HINOJOSA. Madam Speaker, tomorrow the leadership of this House will bring up a budget reconciliation bill which makes cuts to Medicaid, food stamp programs for children, student loan aid programs that will force thousands of college students to leave school and prevent thousands more from even beginning higher education at the community college or university of their choice.

At a time when we are importing scientists, engineers, doctors, nurses and other highly trained workers to keep our economy running, this House is going to siphon off student aid dollars to provide \$70 billion of tax cuts for the rich. According to the Congressional Budget Office, there will be nearly \$8 billion in new charges to students and families that will raise the cost of their college loans at a time when the cost of higher education is rising much faster than the rate of inflation.

This reconciliation bill is not about controlling runaway Federal spending. It is about destroying our future for the short-term benefit of a privileged few. I urge my colleagues to oppose this shortsighted budget reconciliation bill.

MEDICAID

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, in the midst of our effort to rein in Federal spending, you have Members of this body and special interest groups telling the American people that we are slashing Medicaid. They are saying that our Deficit Reduction Act will actually cut Medicaid.

Madam Speaker, our plan does not cut. Since when does slowing the growth, and tremendous growth at that, from 7.3 percent to 7 percent a year constitute a cut? The left needs to stop playing games. If they want us to keep spending and spending until there is nothing left, until we cannot spend any more, then they need to be honest about it and they need to say that. But don't call a 0.3 percent reduction in growth a cut. It is dishonest and our constituents deserve better.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

(Mr. SALAZAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam Speaker, I stand united with my fellow Blue Dogs in protest of this reckless budget vote that we will be taking this week. I have said time and time again that our budget is a moral document and it is about our priorities and values as a nation.

Let us be clear about this budget reconciliation and what it will do for America.

It will pay for tax cuts for the rich on the backs of our Nation's poorest, including low-income seniors who receive help from Medicaid.

It abandons rural America by proposing \$1 billion in cuts to ag commodity programs.

It takes aim at valuable research and conservation programs that will help farmers to stay on the land.

And in a time when everyone is concerned about rising energy prices, this bill cuts funds for renewable energy programs. Yet none of these savings will go towards balancing the budget.

Together we can do better. We need to return to responsible budget principles that include pay-as-you-go spending. We need a balanced budget amendment. And we need a Federal budget that is honest with the American people.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this budget reconciliation.

PRESERVING OUR SYSTEM OF JUSTICE

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, last March Atlanta experienced one of the worst instances of courthouse violence on record. A defendant overpowered a courthouse security guard, grabbed her weapon and shot a judge dead in his own courtroom. The defendant then escaped, setting off a massive manhunt until he was captured a short while later.

Incidents of courthouse violence are spreading. Chicago, Illinois, and Tyler, Texas, have also experienced vicious crimes against our judicial system. Many States are working to prevent this from happening again by improving courthouse security. This is a step in the right direction. But we must do more to protect judges, attorneys, jurors, and other courthouse employees from ever having to confront this kind of danger. We must not allow criminals to compromise our judicial system.

Today we have an opportunity to act to strengthen penalties against those who commit courthouse violence and protect Federal judiciary employees from falling prey to criminals attacking their personal finances.

Madam Speaker, the Secure Access to Justice and Court Protection Act is before us today, and I urge my colleagues to support this important initiative to preserve and protect our system of justice.

CRUEL REPUBLICAN MEDICAID CUTS AND MISGUIDED PRIORITIES—AMERICA CAN DO BETTER

(Mr. STUPAK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, tomorrow House Republicans will show